

RE: Proceeding 04-233

Once again the issue of "localism" has arisen. I am a small market broadcaster (one of the majority of broadcasters in the United States I may add). I have followed the writings of the commission on this matter, traveled to San Diego to hear the commissioners speak and read the transcripts from the FCC's public meetings.

The public meetings were not in fact a good representation of what is going on. You went to large metropolitan areas and heard from people who have an axe to grind. So let me enlighten you on what it is like to be a small market broadcaster. It means hearing about what your station is doing right or wrong when you are at a Rotary meeting... after church, or even in line at the grocery store. Why? Because people know you in your town and know what you do. Being a small market broadcaster means covering things like a car wash for the Civitan club... or begging for money on the air for the high school student who has a chance to go live in Greece for a year and study. Being a small market broadcaster is about rushing to the radio station when the skies open up only to find every member of the staff already there, trying to do what they can to help. Being a small market broadcaster is about writing a check to the Chamber of Commerce... not for membership, but to cover a payroll! 1 when they fall short!

Our small group has three people in the news department full time and a host of paid stringers. We have two interns on staff right now. What do these people do? They are our eyes and ears in the community... finding out what is going on and telling everyone from the microphone what they have heard and seen. Now why in a small market would we invest in such a thing? Because in small market broadcasting, you ARE local or you are dead. It is that simple. We are reflective of and responsive to the communities we serve both because we are good neighbors and because it is what needs to be done to stay in business.

We in the small markets are doing all of the Federally suggested and mandated things our distant big cousins are doing in the larger markets. We carry EAS and Amber alerts. We follow all of the same FCC rules that are handed down. But in addition, we make time for political candidates to talk to people. We provide untold amounts of free time to every manner of "public service" issue that comes down the pike. During the presidential debates we fought to find people who would provide us a feed so we could carry it because we felt it was THAT important (there are no Federal feeds of such things). In addition we pay nearly 900 times the amount for our spectrum as do our contemporaries in the larger markets. We are allowed a certain small number of stations in our markets while XM and SERIUS each put over 100 signals in our markets.

I hope that at some point the FCC or Congress if need be, will step outside the beltway and see what the real heart of broadcasting is doing. We serve our communities without Andy and Opie, Howard Stern and Janet Jackson. We don't just give public service Lip Service... we LIVE public service each and every day of the year. Adding one more layer of responsibility and reporting to broadcasting will be no big deal to the big group owners. But as for the rest of us in broadcasting... the small market operators... this next one may just be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

Thank you for reading. Chris Rolando

